

I350.82048
ILLI 7
c.3

32125333

DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE AND
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS



Illinois
Small
Business
Development
Center

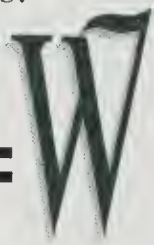
Office of
Women's
Business
Development



MISSION AND HISTORY

In 1985, the governor created a position for a Women's Business Advocate on behalf of women entrepreneurs. Illinois is one of five states in which a Women's Business Advocate is funded entirely by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Small Business Development Center program.

The Women's Business Advocate serves as an organizing liaison for women business owners and as a resource for women entrepreneurs who are starting, stabilizing or expanding their businesses. The Office of Women's Business Development (OWBD) enhances the impact of Women Business Enterprises (WBE) and increases the visibility of women business owners in the state of Illinois.



RESOURCES

The OWBD works with individual companies and women's professional associations to help women entrepreneurs tackle the wide range of problems they may encounter in their businesses.

The Office provides information, referral and procurement assistance and serves as an information conduit to business resources throughout the state. Educational workshops and professional assistance also are available year round for interested women entrepreneurs through the Illinois Small Business Development Center Network. A highly specialized small business development center (SBDC) located within the Women's Business Development Center in Chicago, places special emphasis on assisting women business owners and offers extensive educational seminars and professional support.

In 1994, the OWBD published "New Voices, New Leadership: A Survey Of Illinois Women Business Owners." This survey represents the largest empirical investigation of Illinois women business owners to date. Project results are being used to create and

implement new and improved programs for women business owners and is the basis for further research.

The Illinois Women's Network For Entrepreneurial Training (IWNET) program matches successful women entrepreneurs (mentors) with women business owners whose companies are ready to grow (proteges). For a period of one year, the mentor serves as a role model and offers technical and management assistance to her protege. The Women's Business Advocate serves as the statewide coordinator for the IWNET program. Local mentor/protege programs are developed by the area SBDC and/or a women's business and professional organization.

An important area of OWBD is the development of local Women's Business Councils. WBCouncils are comprised of individuals representing various industry and business sectors, government and chambers of commerce. The WBCouncils work to advocate for effective policy changes and appropriations and serve as an information conduit to the legislated Illinois Women's Business Ownership Council. Local WBCouncils work with the statewide network of SBDCs to impact directly on the local economy and provide a forum for exploring issues not always addressed by local business organizations.

DCCA's Minority, Women and Disabled Business Loan Program provides direct financing for small businesses at a below-market interest rate in cooperation with private sector lenders. Loans under this program can receive state funds ranging from \$15,000 to a maximum of \$50,000.

Other programs can be accessed through the OWBD, such as assistance in regulatory compliance matters, workplace safety, licensing, permits and job training.

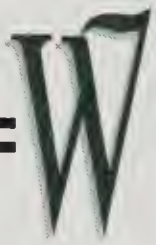


Printed by the Authority of the State of Illinois

Printed on recycled paper

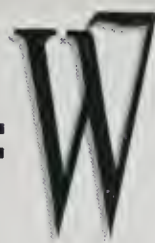
950258 1500 11/94

This brochure has been developed through a partnership between the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs as a service to Illinois small businesses under cooperative agreement #SB-2M-00097-10.



ACTIVITIES

- ☐ Explores women's business issues including registration and certification of women-owned firms in Illinois; funding or access to credit for start-up companies; and selling to the state and federal government.
- ☐ Provides advocacy efforts on behalf of women entrepreneurs on an as-needed basis.
- ☐ Provides staff support to the Illinois Women's Business Council, created by Senate Bill 1803.
- ☐ Publishes the Women's Business Calendar of Events, a statewide compendium of conferences, seminars and workshops for women business owners.
- ☐ Maintains a database list of more than 25,000 women business owners, advocates and associations.
- ☐ Sponsors or co-sponsors conferences for women business owners.
- ☐ Represents the agency at trade shows, expos and conferences.
- ☐ Provides one-on-one counseling and referral to women entrepreneurs.
- ☐ Develops and maintains the list of Illinois' Top 500 Women-Owned Businesses and Top 25 Women Exporters.
- ☐ Networks with women's business advocates in other states with the purpose of sharing advocacy gains and program information.
- ☐ Coordinates, through the Illinois Small Business Development Center Network, the expansion of the Illinois Women's Network Entrepreneurial Training (IWNET) program.



FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- ☐ Expand the local Women's Business Council network from five to ten WBCouncils.
- ☐ Establish an Illinois Alliance of Women's Business Councils.
- ☐ Coordinate a statewide conference for representatives of local WBCouncils.
- ☐ Promote, by SBDC region, the top 500 Illinois women business owners.
- ☐ Coordinate an annual conference for the IWNET mentor/protege teams.
- ☐ Expand the IWNET from eight to fifteen program sites.

Mollie Cole

Women's Business Advocate

312/814-7176

Susan E. Nicol

Women's Business Liaison

312/814-8736

Fax: 312/814-2807 TDD: 800/419-0667

Illinois Business Assistance Line

800/252-2923

**Department of Commerce
and Community Affairs**

620 East Adams
Springfield, IL 62701

James R. Thompson Center
100 West Randolph, Suite 3-400
Chicago, IL 60601

**Department of Commerce
and Community Affairs**

100 West Randolph, Suite 3-400
Chicago, IL 60601

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 122537134